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What Happens to Our Bright Young Men?

G. R. DAVIES

"WHEN everybody tries to be somebody, we all finish up by being nobody," observed a disgruntled chairman at a branch conference last year. He was prompted by the Saturday afternoon queues outside tea-shops; undue force was given to his remark, no doubt, by his own thirst and the impossibility of getting a quick tea at any price, even as part of official expenses. But he had hit upon a point worth considering. In general, our civilization indicates its truth; in particular, the profession of librarianship gives us plenty of examples.

There are no contemporary giants in the library profession. Loud voices there are, calling for re-organization and rationalization, and the thousand and one other tags by which the process of dodging a straightforward task is known. Able and intelligent men there are, with perspicacity to discern social trends and gear their own plans accordingly. This is no more than we should expect after a few decades of compulsory schooling. But there are no great figures to inspire a rising generation.

Yet in the 'twenties and 'thirties there was no dearth of bright young men. Evergreens of controversy flourished; aspiration knew no summit; plans and potential energy everywhere. On the eve of the 'fifties we hear little of the ideas, see still less of their effects. It is so quiet now we might think their one-time champions were long since dead; "gone, all are gone," the old familiar voices, bleating no more.

They are not all gone; many are not even silent. But to hear them is to weep, maiden-wise, on the inconstancy of man. Those bright young men were assistants, tea-boys, counter-hands, branch librarians; some, still in the ranks, are naturally a little dispirited and out of voice, but a larger number is now in the circle of chiefs and directors-in-charge-of-specialized-administration. How are the bright young men fallen—fallen to the bigotry of pomp and power! And their ideas? What story is there now but unconvincing excuses as to why this is impossible and that is impracticable? Young men demanding tools have grown into secure officials not finishing the job—sometimes barely starting it. Why?

We must not be unfair in our strictures. Dealing with local govern-

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ment committees, or tackling the endless jobs which properly belong to all responsible positions are tasks enough to set back the most rabid enthusiast. Youth's destructive exuberance is mostly unsuited to the patient plodding by which means alone is any project improved. But have these considerations always been wholly responsible for timidity, reversal of policy and the continuance of reviled traditions? Are yesteryear's bright young men to be censured with youthful insincerity, lack of courage or latterday cynicism? It is a pitiful circumstance that so many promising young men are overwhelmed at a time when they should be growing to maturity, assuaging incompetence by indulging in careerism. We might usefully pay more attention to this distressing business of losing enterprise; it is far more urgent than haggling with ministries over Acts of Parliament and grants-in-aid, and a solution would in the long run do more to earn respect for librarianship than all the efforts to gain status by higher salaries.

The problem arises, it seems, from a weakness in professional training which begins to show as soon as examinations are passed. The neat little syllabus of study is manifestly incapable of helping a candidate confronted with actual problems of discipline and delegation. We mostly lose our bright young men as soon as they become fellows. They think it's the end of the race, when it is nothing more than the starter's pistol. At this point, it would be fashionable to parade the examiners, and exterminate them; or at least pray that they may somehow have some imagination *thrust* upon them (the two other ways being out of the question by the nature of things). But as it can never be established just what examiners would do with their own or each other's questions (without the book beside them), we can never fairly take sides. It doesn't matter. Examinations will continue to be held. The quaint academic idea that scholarship can be measured has become a central faith of educationists, and it isn't really worthwhile to attack windmill ideas of religious intensity.

Since examinations will continue, let us be aware of their implications. Their value is in the discipline of study and the objective they provide. Their danger is in the stupidity which causes the qualifications gained by them to be taken at face value; Bernard Shaw has pointed out in his latest play that if you have been at Oxford it is enough, in the eyes of the world—the sort of degree, if indeed you get one at all, is rarely questioned. Even men of less than 93 may understand this. Life will become so much easier when everybody understands that the docile acceptance of examination-passing as a standard of ability is merely a hammering of queer-shaped pegs into non-existent holes. Judgment on face-value has distressing results; many men choose wives (or women, husbands) that way, it is true, but more often than not live to regret it. So with examination qualifications. The paraphernalia of learning may be useful for the process, but the quantitative result computed by a shaky schedule of marks has next to no value.

The passing of examinations is a prelude to becoming a librarian; how obvious it is, alas, from our librarians that so many deem it to be the end of the struggle. There are but few suggestions as to what a librarian should begin to study beyond the absurd limitations of an examination syllabus. The duties of a chief librarian are not, fortunately, closely

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defined; it would be a dull career if they were. It depends upon each person individually what sort of librarian he or she is going to be, and therefore on what sort of work time is going to be spent. Even so, whatever he may decide for himself, whether to be bookman, administrator or glorified public-relations-officer, he will find there is a base common to all. It is this: his worth as a chief librarian will be judged on the value of the library he controls and by the people whom he serves. We easily forget such a simple observation. So often an ambitious young man has concentrated upon making a name for himself within the profession, rather than within the community supporting him. When a librarian is busy fiddling about with propaganda while an out-of-date technical work stands on his shelves and a new edition of it remains in the bookshop, then the obsolete item shrieks censure and mocks his pretences. Print and protestation are cheap and have furthered many careers; but libraries and readers have rarely benefited that way.

So what may a bright young man do? Is there any way he may avoid growing into a busy little man, pompous in futile activity? Is there any way he may redeem his profession from becoming an excrescence upon the community? To these questions the answers are neither simple nor straightforward; and there are many which to make public were impolitic. Hints are to be found in the inside workings of practically all our libraries to-day. The answers will be revealed more easily by never forgetting that librarianship consists of simple essentials: an understanding of authors and their books, and an ability to dispose those books so that their full value is available to readers. That is the flame of the matter; all else is smoke. It means that a librarian will spend his time in getting personally to know the nature of his wares, and devising means of communicating the essence of his knowledge. It is a clear way, though each according to his temperament will deem it easy or hard. It demands the exercise on all occasions of a dogged personal simplicity, a refusal to be inflated by career-success and so rise balloon-like into the rarefied atmosphere of "higher administration" or "professional amelioration"; not to spend too many hours upon those ornaments of democracy—the unnecessary, name-making committees which nearly always gravely decide with astounding lack of humour to accept the inevitable after it has already happened.

A world of mass-movements and conditioned thinking, torpid with organization and sinecurism, cries out for individuals, not as leaders, but exemplars—persons who can control the natural lust for the pomp and power of command. Is there any reason why the delicate profession of librarianship should not supply them?

Active Divisions

JANUARY is the month of A.G.M.'s, but it is regretted that, so far, few reports have been received of the papers that must have been read on those occasions.

At the East Midland Division's A.G.M. 143, out of a total membership of 430, were present to hear Prof. Pinto analyse the work of T. S. Eliot in a lecture lasting nearly an hour and a half. The Division's Press Secretary states that this should confound the critics who claim that librarians are

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more interested in arranging books than reading them. At the December meeting of this Division papers were given describing the work of the Institute of Education Library at Nottingham and the Technical Library of the Hosiery and Allied Trades Research Association. One speaker contended that a science graduate would be more use in the latter library than a generally trained librarian.

Mr. J. D. Stewart, speaking at the Greater London Division's meeting on January 19th, would have disagreed with the speaker at Nottingham. He thought that one of the most interesting changes in the profession in his time was that nowadays it was recognised that training in librarianship fitted an assistant for work in any type of library. The Greater London Division also heard Mr. T. E. Callander condemning the continuance of obsolete practices and Mr. G. Vale claiming that the basis for the public libraries' appeal to the general public must be pure literature. Mr. L. J. Shaw, of Leyton, in the discussion, seemed to sum up when he said that Mr. Vale's basis would be possible when the practices mentioned by Mr. Callander had been scrapped. Then it would be possible for the assistant to get to know the inside of the books and not just the pages prescribed for stamping.

The North-Western *News Letter* made the most interesting reading of the month and the Editor is to be congratulated on the first number of this joint production. It is pleasing to see that two more Divisions are preparing surveys of methods, etc., in operation in their areas. The North-Western intend to publish extracts from their survey in successive issues of the *News Letter*. The East Midlands will shortly have on sale *The Students' Guide to Libraries of the East Midlands*. Listing libraries, printers, etc., where examples of the methods to be studied under the L.A. syllabus may be seen, the *Guide* is classified broadly under examination subjects. The Greater London Division hope to publish their *Union List of Bibliographies* very shortly; it will list over 400 items.

If you like trying your hand at quizzes then get hold of the January number of the *Wessex Bookman*. In this magazine there is also an article by Mr. Berwick Sayers and one describing the Isle of Wight travelling library.

Bristol and District started their year with a talk on "Modern printing methods and machinery," by Mr. Philip Wright, a director of a printing and publishing firm. His talk was illustrated with the use of an epidiascope and presented an aspect of bibliography in a more palatable form than that given in textbooks. This meeting continued a tradition of holding a number of meetings in the University of Bristol Library.

South Wales and Monmouthshire Division met at Barry when they had a magazine evening ranging from "Philosophy of librarianship" to "Tracing defaulters."

FEBRUARY MEETINGS.

The Yorkshire Division held their A.G.M. at Huddersfield. After the usual business, Mr. S. T. Dibnah delivered a paper entitled "Scrapbook of the last half-century of public libraries." He presented a clear and lucid idea of the development of libraries during the period and all the latent feuds of the past, such as the battle of card versus printed catalogue and various extension activities, emerged in a new light. In summing up, Mr.

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Dibnah posed certain questions asking whether in the view of members our energies had been dissipated in the provision of material which had no real place in libraries.

On February 22nd, Bristol and District met for their A.G.M. The speaker was Mr. Liddiard, the Swindon P.R.O., whose subject was "Public relations, Civic information and libraries." Commenting on mutual co-operation between P.R.O.'s and libraries, he thought a future clash might occur on the question of whether the P.R.O.'s or the Reference Departments should supply certain information. He thought that libraries should undertake more public opinion polls and surveys.

The Midland Division held a joint meeting at Bilston on February 15th. After visits to the Library and local industries, Mr. C. Parish spoke on "Professional organisation in the West Midlands," and dealt with the relative functions of the L.A. Branch and the A.A.L. Division.

NEWS FROM OVERSEAS:

Both the Midlands Division and the South Eastern Division have been privileged to hear of the experiences of assistants visiting and working abroad. Miss E. Clarke (Hove) spoke to the S.E. of her 12 months at Rochester (U.S.A.) and gave an excellent picture of the American public library system, commenting, in parenthesis, on other topics such as food and nylons! The Midlands Division listened with great interest to Dr. W. Bonser (Birmingham Univer.) comparing the university and research libraries of Northern Italy with similar libraries in Great Britain. Mr. L. T. Jolley (Selly Oak Colleges) said how he was aware of an air of familiarity when entering university libraries in North America. He also spoke on the experiment at Harvard for shelving the rarer and little used material in a building some miles away from Harvard, and in which ten other libraries in the Boston area were renting storage space. This idea he thought might be applied to regional library bureaux in this country.

THE CENTENARY:

This has been discussed at various A.G.M.'s. The S.E. Division appeared to be content to leave the Centenary to the Committee. In North Wales, the new chairman, Miss E. Williams, in her address stimulated a lively discussion, and several suggestions were passed to the Committee for consideration.

NEWS SHEETS:

The S.E. Division opens with a very sincere appreciation of the work of the late Mr. Wilfred Hynes, whose death is regretted by the whole Association.

Outpost, Journal of the South West, contains an amusing article on the trials of a librarian in the old days and a ditty on making "The Grade" as well as an informative article by the Borough Treasurer of Torquay on "Certain aspects of local government finance."

CRICKET. The secretary of the East Midlands cricket team, Mr. R. J. Webb, A.L.A., Regional Librarian, Staveley, Derbyshire, would like to hear from any division or library willing to arrange matches.

G.P.R.

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Students' Problems

A. J. WALFORD

THE DECEMBER EXAMINATIONS, 1949.

(Continued).

REGISTRATION: Bibliography. By S. J. BUTCHER.

This paper covers one of the widest fields in the Registration examination, and in December candidates were faced with a searching set of questions designed to cover the whole syllabus equitably. It is, perhaps, unenterprising to include three questions of the "write notes on" variety, but few candidates would criticize the paper on these grounds.

Q. 1 presented the customary interrogation on papermaking with an ingenious "twist." Candidates were asked what problems were caused by the use of inferior materials and methods in the manufacture of book papers. Under the heading of materials one would consider the use of mechanical wood pulp and the resultant loss of strength, the use of antique papers that prevent a book opening flat and the strain placed on the binding by heavy-coated art papers. In dealing with methods, consideration would be given to the poor quality papers produced by re-pulping, over-bleaching and excessive calendering; the coating of art papers with mineral matter, which makes them brittle and difficult to bind; and the bulky, absorbent papers produced by "free" beating. In addition, candidates were asked to explain the provisions of the Library Association specifications for papers. Either part of the question would have been a formidable assignment in the limited time available. Candidates were asked to answer both parts and this called for quick thinking and hard writing.

Q. 2 called for an enumeration of the characteristics of a good book type with reference, where possible, to some current designs. Some candidates were confused as to whether this referred to physical or aesthetic considerations, but the wording of the question obviously indicates such characteristics as legibility, aesthetic appeal, suitability to text, accurate range and similarity of characters. It should be noted that the question called for enumeration rather than discussion.

Q. 3 asked for short accounts of the particular advantages of methods of reproducing textual material. The three processes were "replika," "photo-litho" and "photogravure." The latter is adequately dealt with in the text books, but I doubt if many students are familiar with the "replika" process. This is a private process, used by Messrs. Lund Humphries, and its details are not generally known. It is, in my opinion, quite unfair to ask a candidate to describe the process.

The usual process for the reprinting of books already in existence is the photo-litho-offset process. The copy, which may be an unfolded section of a book, is suitably illuminated by arc lamps in a studio, and a negative made the same size as the copy. The metal plate which is to be the printing surface, is coated with a substance sensitive to light in a dark room and put in contact with the negative in a suitable frame. The sensitised metal, with the negative in position, is then exposed to light for a given period. The light passes through the clear parts of the negatives (*i.e.*, the lines of

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type) and hardens the sensitive substance on the metal. The plate is then washed to remove the background (*i.e.*, those parts represented by the white paper of the sheet).

The metal plate is clamped round a cylinder on the printing machine. Revolving against the curved plate is first a damping roller which imparts a thin film of moisture to the plate, then the inking rollers come in contact with the plate and transfer ink to the image (*i.e.*, the lines of type) but not to the non-image areas which are holding moisture. The inked plate then comes in contact with a second cylinder covered with a special rubber blanket: this takes the inked impression from the plate and transfers it to the paper which is fed round a third cylinder. Negatives can be supported on glass, film or paper, and there are several methods of transferring the image to the metal.

Q. 4, on "microcards," was a topical and opportune question on a subject that is causing some comment and controversy in America. No candidate could plead ignorance of this development after Mr. R. L. Collison's excellent article in the November-December number of *The Library Assistant*. Those who went to the source and read Rider's *The Scholar and the future of the research library* probably gained high marks on this question.

Q.5 was the familiar friend asking for notes on eight well known bibliographical terms. Q.6 was the expected question on illustration, asking for a list of the main intaglio methods and an outline of the processes involved in one of them. This should have held no terrors for the candidate who had followed a systematic course of study.

Q.7 was another standard requirement: it called for three brief binding specifications and offered a choice of five titles. It should be noted that the examiners have deplored the unrealistic approach that candidates invariably make to this type of question. Full leather should be used sparingly, and the specification must be designed to suit the potential life of the book and the quality of production.

Q.8 demanded notes on section, signature, collation and format. These terms are adequately discussed in any reputable course or text-book. In Q.9, still pursuing their generous way, the examiners asked the candidates to explain five well-known binding terms which would have been familiar to Entrance examination candidates. Q.10, on description, gave scope to the candidate with initiative. The only limit to his field would be the amount of time available. If examiners wish to include this type of question either the number must be reduced or the time extended.

REGISTRATION: History of English Literature.

There was just enough scope in this paper to enable the average student to pass. So far as literary form was concerned, the questions were spread with scrupulous fairness over prose, poetry, drama and the novel. Chronologically, the distribution was less well-balanced. On pre-Elizabethan literature one question was set, a familiar one on Caxton (Q.3). The Elizabethan dramatists were ignored, but there were questions on the English Bible and on Spenser or Bacon. The period 1660-1798 had no less than

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four questions devoted to it, leaving the remaining two for the Victorian and modern periods.

In Q.5 the examiners reverted to the habit of digging out not so well known writers (preferably Restoration) and asking for 150 words on any two of them. Sir John Vanbrugh and Mrs. Aphra Behn were presumably there to provide make-weight for Wycherley and Otway. Not everyone, I feel, could have written twenty cogent lines on each of the two first mentioned. On the other hand, Q.7, on Fielding or Goldsmith, was a "gift," and Q.1 was of the type which should be set more often. It asked for notes on four verse forms—heroic couplet (some overlap with Q.6 here); rhyme royal (wrongly to be traced back to *Kingis Quair*); blank verse (not forgetting dramatic blank verse); terza rima (citing E. B. Browning as well as Dante's original and the Dorothy Sayers' translation).

The problem of the *origins* of the Augustan Age (Q.6) was not to be lightly attempted. It called for a knowledge of the use of the heroic couplet, in isolated form, by the Elizabethan poets, and its later adoption by Waller and Cowley. The influence of French literature is an important general factor.

With the Gaelic revival of the eighteenth century (Q.8 alternative) we associate Macpherson's *Ossian*, primarily. No doubt the Gothic novel was preferred as the alternative. Q.9 dealt with the outstanding Victorian novels of social conditions. Dickens, Reade, Mrs. Gaskell, Charles Kingsley and George Gissing were among the leading writers in this field.

Q.10 asked for an outline history of British drama from 1867 to 1914, stressing the importance of these two dates. 1867 was the date of T. W. Robertson's *Caste*, a play which gave the impoverished drama of the time a new lead. 1914 needs no bush, but it does unfortunately truncate the dramatic careers of Shaw and Galsworthy, so far as the history of the period is concerned. (J. M. Barrie is well inside). Notice, too, that the question states *British* drama. We must thus include the Irish national theatre and the plays of J. M. Synge and W. B. Yeats. What *could* the examiners have expected from the Registration candidate on this question? It really belongs to the Final.

FINAL: Bibliography and Book Selection.

Section A offered no terrors; indeed, a Registration student of this subject might well have felt at home with both questions. Q.1 dealt with alternatives to the re-setting of type (electros; stereos; litho-printing; photo-gravure, etc.). The article on "near-print" in the September, 1949 *Journal of Documentation* is useful here. Q.2, on the early seventeenth-century press and variants, was a simple matter for those who knew their McKerrow.

Section B gave sufficient elbow room, too, although Q.3 required careful reading. It ran: "What types of bibliographies are necessary as guides to the use of periodicals? Name and describe an example of each." Union lists and such select lists as Ulrich will have to be included; also indexes to periodicals, as well as the evaluative bibliographies of, say, Crane and Patterson (for chemistry), Louttit (for psychology), Wright and Platt (for geography), and Hicks (for law). The *Bibliographic index* forms a further

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type. Q.4 (requiring data on three outstanding printed catalogues of special libraries) calls for no comment except to stress the importance of a detailed knowledge of such aids. Q.5, asking for one standard bibliography on six important subjects, was surely not beyond the powers of any candidate. Obvious choices might have been: Tomkinson (private presses); British Museum *Catalogue of books printed in the XVth century* (incunabula); *Books for youth* (children's books); *Index Catalogue* (medicine); Geoffrey Davies (17th century English history); Lanson (French literature).

Section C was equally inoffensive. Q.7 was topical, and either the Metropolitan Borough scheme or the Farmington Plan could have been drawn upon. Repercussions on book selection policy clearly affect not only the library which is specialising in, say, chemistry, but also the other libraries in the schemes, so far as that particular subject is concerned. An outline description of the main series of O.S. maps (Q.8) was modestly worded. It covers the 1in., 6in., 25in. and 50in., not forgetting the new style O.S. maps of which a provisional edition is being made available,—the National Grid 1in., 2½in., 6in., 25in. and 50in. Three recent pamphlets issued by Ordnance Survey on the subject give all that is required.

Book selection, as such, received only one question. Two questions, on the other hand, were set on periodicals. Q.6 dealt with periodicals as specialist book reviews; Q.9 covered periodicals primarily as contributions to their respective subjects (the arts; music; language and literature). This very fair paper wound up with the familiar: "Give brief descriptive notes on any five of the following:" Apart from the incorrect titling of the *Yearbook of universities of the Commonwealth*, the reference books listed call for no comment; they offered a really generous choice.

FINAL: Library Organisation and General Librarianship.

By F. N. McDONALD.

A higher proportion than usual of factual questions, requiring in some cases information just beyond the reach of part-time students, dismayed at least a few entrants. They have my sympathy. It is impossible, within a year, to cover the whole syllabus in the detail suggested by some of these questions. Most students select parts of the syllabus for closer study than the others and therefore an element of luck enters. Out of luck were those who spent very much time on the great libraries of the world. In luck were those who did history, for they had three questions.

The history of education for librarianship in England and the position of the University libraries in the national scheme of inter-lending were the subjects of the first two questions. More interesting, especially to those with any experience of writing for the local press, was the third question asking for 300 words, suitable for publication, on the subject of a daily branch library service in the large local prison. Here one might stress the necessity of answering questions in the form required by the examiners. A report to a committee must be set out like a report, properly dated, addressed and signed. A discussion should include an evaluation of the good and bad points of any system and include suggestions for improvements, while a description should deal only with things as they are. In this particular case something bright and attractive was needed.

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Next came one of the "What do you know of the work of . . . ?" questions, five names being given, none of them over-familiar and one that of a Frenchman, surely out of place in this paper?

This was followed by a fairly easy question on the advantages and disadvantages of reflex copying as compared with those of the photostat. Q. 6 was unusual, asking for a list of "Hints for beginners" on the preparation of library estimates: on first sight simple, but in reality rather tricky. It calls for a nice sense of judgment to decide what to tell a beginner and what to leave until later. In all answers where the facts available are too many to set down in the time limits it is in the selection of essential facts that a good candidate reveals his quality. One such essential is to make full use of advice from the Treasurer, and also in public libraries from the Surveyor. A beginner would also profit substantially from a study of Savage's *The Librarian and his Committee*, which contains the best hints ever given on the subject.

Q. 7 was a free-for-all on "The annual farce which is termed the L.A. Council election . . ." Q. 8, asking for a comparison of British and Scandinavian public library systems is not strictly in the syllabus, but could, of course, be answered by anyone who has studied for Part 3 (a). Q. 9, "State . . . what progress was made by English county libraries between 1929 and 1939?" was not at all easy to anyone who has not worked in a county library. We all know of progress, but what took place precisely during that decade is more difficult to remember. It was, in general terms, a period of remarkable expansion in which some counties began to give for the first time a service equal to the best provided by urban libraries. The last question dealt with the desirability or necessity of new archive legislation.

On the whole it was a reasonable paper. Anyone who had studied properly should have been able to answer six questions.

FINAL: Library Routine and Administration, (a) Public Libraries.

By F. N. McDONALD.

If some of the questions were not up to Final standard, the candidates themselves were hardly likely to complain. The questions, for the most part, could be answered fairly easily from the more familiar text-books. Periodical contributions were not drawn upon so freely as hitherto.

The first two questions dealt with British library law as affecting audit of accounts and the appointment and functions of library committees; four sets of legal enactments are involved, and it meant rapid writing to summarise them in the time allowed. The third question in this group required a description of the main features of two out of (a) the Fraser Valley Union Library, the film of which has been widely shown, (b) the country library service of New South Wales, which has been described in McColvin's *Report on Australian Public Libraries* and also in Lynravn, and (c) the Farmington Plan.

The second group had questions on the registration of borrowers and the issue of tickets and stock records. Both were for *large* libraries, of which the examiners appear to be very fond. Then followed another question requiring more than thirty minutes to answer adequately. "In what

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circumstances is it desirable to provide a separate commercial and/or technical library? Outline the main features of the administration and arrangement of such a library." It is asking rather much, even for an outline, of both the administration and the arrangement.

Q. 7, "What should be the objectives of an Annual Report . . . ?" was good. What should they be, anyway? Mainly, I should say, to convince those who need convincing that the ratepayers are getting value for money, to describe the less readily observable services the library is giving, the difficulties which are being met and how they may be overcome, and to present a formal record of the year's work. It can be a valuable piece of publicity and should if possible be printed attractively. The cost of printing is probably not much more than the cost of duplicating, if everything is taken into consideration.

A scheme for the provision of hospital library facilities was the subject of the next question, and this was followed by a quotation for explanation and discussion. It needed explanation. The candidates I have spoken to could only hazard a guess as to what it meant. No doubt to be able to understand the less lucid remarks of one's colleagues is a useful attribute, and that probably justifies the form in which the question was set. The final question was "Discuss the impact of the British National Bibliography on public library administration." A brief answer might have been, "Not discernible as yet." The probable impact is another matter.

The Librarian of the L.A./A.A.L. Library at Chaucer House has, I understand, been put to much unnecessary annoyance by requests sent to him for the postal loan of text-books on English literature and local government which should be in every public library. The L.A./A.A.L. Library is a professional library only, and if the public libraries concerned do not stock the standard text-books on English literature and local government, it is high time that their staffs agitated to put this right.

Outcrop - III

R. L. COLLISON

The first issue of OUTCROP was almost ignored for a few days: then a number of suggestions began to come in—some from public libraries and many more from special librarians—so that by the end of the month I found that I was in the enviable position of being able to select only the best from a very interesting batch. Incidentally, the two volumes of the Library Association's *Year's Work in Librarianship*, covering the period 1939-46, which have just been published, are full of similar material and should not be missed by any librarian who is genuinely interested in his profession.

Mr. K. D. C. Vernon (Librarian, Royal Society of Arts) draws attention to three excellent articles: "A marine engineer's review of technical information and library services," by Commander A. F. Smith (*Transactions of the Institute of Marine Engineers*, September, 1949, pages 153-162), is an outline of the information services available to the marine engineer, including thumbnail sketches of library associations, types of libraries, classification by

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U.D.C., technique, etc. Arundell Edaile writes on "Great libraries and their functions" (*Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, December 17th, 1948, pages 59-69) dealing more with the functions of great libraries than with the libraries themselves, and pointing out the insoluble problem of coping with the vast increase in the number of books published. An eminent scientist, Sir Alfred Egerton, discusses "Scientific information services" (*ibid.*, July 29th, 1949, pages 688-704) and suggests improvements designed to meet the requirements described at the Royal Society's Scientific Information Conference.

A good many librarians, writes Mr. Paul Nannes (Reference Librarian, Exeter), probably noticed the description of Mr. Gilbert Bryant's card index of notes on fifty thousand country houses in Great Britain (*Country Life*, January 13th, 1950). This file, forming a complete annotated catalogue of country houses, manor houses, vicarages, etc., built before 1837, includes large numbers which have not yet been described in *Country Life*. "The Library of Congress," by David C. Mearns (*Parliamentary Affairs*, Summer, 1949, pages 222-28) is not an historical account—no mention is made of Spoffard, Putnam or McLeish—but a survey of the nature of the collections and the methods by which they are acquired. We are reminded that although the Library is a national service, it is first and foremost a Congressional and government library, and that it must constantly adapt itself and its resources to the changing conditions which confront the U.S.A.

I have a contribution to offer, says Mr. R. H. Millward (Reference Librarian, Croydon), which proved of practical value to a colleague of mine in Group "A" of the last Registration Examination. It is the Abstracts and Indexes Special Number of *Chemistry and Industry* (November 26th, 1949) in which Dr. G. M. Findlay writes on the work of the Abstracting Services Consultative Committee, Dr. G. M. Dyson on Abstracts, indexes and ideals, and Dr. J. G. Cockburn on the Indexing of abstracts. But the outstanding article is by Dr. J. E. Holmstrom on the Coding and indexing of knowledge (page 826 onwards) in which the various methods of arrangement of material, and advantages and disadvantages of alphabetical indexing and U.D.C. and Colon classification are described. Mechanical selection with punched cards and electronic and microphotographic equipment are discussed, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's method of selecting references from a microfilm "several miles long," and rephotographing them at once, described.

From Dr. A. J. Walford (Senior Technical Officer, Ministry of Defence) comes a reminder that Ordnance Survey Maps are fully described in the *Post Office Electrical Engineers' Journal* (October, 1949, pages 133-140): the first part covers the maps in general use—the 1in., 6in., 25in. and 50in.—giving details of each. The second deals with the new style maps—1in., 2½in., 6in., 25in., and 50in., and gives details of the application of the new grid, together with a table showing various kinds of grid references. A photograph and brief description of Derbyshire mobile library appears in *Motor Transport* (December 24th, 1949, page 4), showing the build and interior fittings of this new van constructed by J. H. Jennings and Sons, Ltd.

Dr. Walford also draws attention to two items which are "stimulating in the graphic sense, as well as being up-to-date."

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The first is an article entitled "Printing: a graphic portfolio of the technique, present and future, of putting ink to paper," and is taken from the October, 1949, number of the American journal *Fortune*, pages 101 to 109. It has up-to-date sections on letterpress, lithography and gravure, giving details not only of the processes, but of their relative advantages and disadvantages. A number of coloured illustrations show the various stages of each process. There are also notes on new developments, such as the photo-typesetting machine, electronic scanners (for use in colour printing), and on "The future in offset."

"Recent developments in the design and construction of library buildings" is the title of an article by Walter Segal in the August, 1949, issue of *Building Digest*, pages 265 to 274. The writer covers municipal, school, college and institutional libraries, and the half-tone illustrations and plans form an excellent supplement to those in Ashburner. A list of the illustrations may prove an inducement for some to see this journal:—

Biblioteca Cantonale, Lugano (2 photos of interior, 2 of exterior).

Southfields Branch Library, Leicester (1 photo of interior, 2 of exterior; with a ground plan).

University of Glasgow, Reading Room (1 photo of interior, 1 of exterior; with a ground plan).

New Bodleian Library, Oxford: bookstacks (3 photos).

Swiss National Library, Berne (1 photo of interior, 2 of exterior; with a ground plan)

New library for Middle Temple (plans and elevations).

Time (overseas edition, February 11th, 1946) contains two library items, points out Mr. Reginald Hoy (Deputy Librarian, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine). The first, on page 20, describes the liquidation of the *Almanach de Gotha* by the Soviet government. "Last week the Red Army descended on its staid old plant (Justus Perthes) at Gotha, Saxony, carried off its presses and confiscated its archives . . . nearly two centuries ago the Almanach had started out as a gilded Who's Who of the Holy Roman Empire's better aristocracy. Later, its finely-printed pages were infiltrated by important commoners and assorted vital statistics. It wound up as little more than a register of political job-holders and royal unemployed . . . the stud book of one of history's most unsuccessful breeding experiments ceased publication." On page 37, the war damage to libraries is summarised: conclusion—"the manuscript, the roll, the tablet (precursors of books) have often come through centuries . . . the book and the library have been respected and safeguarded, even in war, as the very corporate mind of society. In 1939, society . . . turned upon itself and deliberately strove to destroy that mind. It succeeded in a large measure."

Miss Muriel McKinlay (Reference Library, Westminster) writes that *Hansard* (volume 468, September 27th, 1949, columns 144-154) carries the account of the debate on Books Import Licences: it is not a long or important debate, but underlines some interesting points for those of us who are concerned with the supply of foreign books in this country. Mr. Hollis and Mr. Wyatt argued cogently but to no avail: the country must abide by Article 9 of the Loan Agreement, in which we agree not to discriminate against America. As we want to stop a flood of cheap

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American stories and comics reaching this country at considerable dollar cost, we must ban the import of books from all countries without a licence. One sympathises with Mr. Kenneth Lindsay who urged: "May we not at any rate in the world of books make all this talk about European Unity a little bit of a reality?"

The Hon. Treasurer of the A.A.L., Mr. J. S. Bristow, sends the *Readers News* (January, 1950) on pages 7 to 11 of which appear an article by Geoffrey Trease on "How Youth must be served." He discusses the reasons why children turn away from libraries as they grow up, what induces them to buy books:—

- (a) to read in the office or factory during a break (girls generally).
- (b) to read in bed on a Sunday morning.
- (c) to glance at in queues.
- (d) to while away part of a wet holiday.
- (e) to find out how to do something, like make a lathe, build a wireless set, make a dress

and quotes "Adolescents are antipathetic to well-bound books, associating such with school study and preparation for examinations. Such books are 'corny.' They would sooner pay 1s. 6d. or 2s. 6d. for a paper-backed book of their own, which they then throw away or exchange with friends."

The commercial and technical library is no new development, says Miss Christine Stewart (Cataloguing Department, Westminster), but the trade catalogue which forms part of the library is infinitely older, for it originated in the manufacturer's pattern-books, and these existed as early as the fifteenth century for the Venetian glass industry. At least, so says Gontran Goulden in "The use of trade catalogues in Information work" (*Architect and Building News*, October 14th, 1949, pages 379-80). Crying 'ware to the type of catalogue which is "pure and simple blurb whose object is quick sale," Mr. Goulden gives his criteria for selection, draws attention to the British Standard on recommended sizes, and briefly describes the work and services of the Building Centre.

Correspondence

The number, and length, of letters received by the Hon. Editor, have increased so much recently that it has been found necessary to summarize the points made in several instances. It is hoped that correspondents will be tolerant if, in compression, slight distortion has occurred.—Hon. Ed.

PASTIME READING.

Miss B. M. West (*Greenwich*) supports Mr. Blackwell. We cannot draw a fixed line between serious readers and those not worth bothering over, she suggests. Our duty is to the whole public, and not to that section of it whose reading tastes meet with our approval. There are many "serious readers" who pursue no course of study: we should concentrate our service on this large section of the community.

Mr. A. J. Rowberry, A.L.A. (*Dudley*) agrees. We have never been given any educational directive, and to assume it is presumptuous. By recognising the right of the majority to their necessary relaxation we might appeal to a larger proportion of the population than the present "meagre

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trickle."

Supporting Mr. Bate is Mr. N. F. Chalk (*Devon County*), who urges that useful, necessary books have an indirect influence on the whole community, while those who read rubbish pass nothing of value to anyone and derive no benefit themselves. Provision of such material is wasteful of money that is none too plentiful. Better issues rather than bigger should be our aim and our justification.

Mr. A. G. Shepherd (*Islington*) supports this view. "We pay rates and taxes for bread, not circuses." Every book in the library should be of value to the reader. Pandering to the "lowest common denominator" merely increases issues, hinders the serious reader and deters potential staff recruits. A high standard of examinations is incompatible with low standards of literary quality. To cater for the serious reader would better justify expenditure of public money, and fully tax our present resources.

STAFF RECRUITMENT.

Mr. D. J. Fawcett, *Assistant, Croydon Public Libraries*, suggests that the picture is not so black as that painted by Mr. Barclay in the February *Assistant*. Children to-day do have opportunities to hear a librarian speak, or of taking part in conducted tours of local libraries. The centenary celebrations offer an opportunity further to extend our public relations. In the Army, R.A.E.C. personnel, the Ministry of Labour's pamphlet on *Librarianship* and, frequently, keen librarians in Army Education Centres, do all that can be done at present in the way of vocational guidance toward our profession. But commerce and industry offer more lucrative remuneration.

Books for Students

Ralph, R. G. *The library in education*. 1949. (Turnstile Press 7s. 6d.).

This book written by an Instructor at the R.A.F. College, Cranwell, states the case for the teacher-librarian very well. His argument is briefly that the school library is a place where the child is taught to use books and to use a library, and that such teaching can best be done by a teacher, whereas in the junior library the child exercises the skill he has been taught at school, and there the guidance of a professional librarian is appropriate. The author stresses always the complementary function of the teacher and the librarian.

The value of the book lies not in any new facts, but in the author's reasonable and unprejudiced approach to his subject; his exposition of the function of a school librarian is the best I have read.

School libraries have been and in most areas still are, found only in grammar schools. Most current thought therefore presupposes their use by the grammar school type of child who is naturally interested in books. The advent of the Secondary Modern School has changed the situation and the author lays useful stress on methods of presenting library work to non-bookish children.

The book will be of interest to all librarians who are concerned with

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library service for children, either in schools or libraries, and should be useful background reading for candidates for Final Administration.

F.A.S.

Irwin, R. *Librarianship: Essays on Applied Bibliography*, 1949. (Grafton, 8s. 6d.).

There is much enjoyment in reading this re-establishment of librarianship as applied bibliography, although it is the sort of book which makes you feel that a series of discussions with the author would be more profitable. Mr. Irwin says that he is merely introducing the reader to the subject: he is too modest. His method is to issue a series of challenges, mainly in the form of uncompromising assertions on how to learn about and train for librarianship.

In the main the lines followed are: What should we mean by librarianship? Where does it lie in the field of scholarship? How can it be taught to the profession and thus raised to its proper level? Within suggested limits the arguments are logical and often admit of no disagreement; but when many of these limits are set against the world of library assistants, as we find them in the "new" Schools, there is greater room for head-wagging. (It is noticeable that in his reference to learning and teaching librarianship, Mr. Irwin, consciously and otherwise, speaks in terms of his own post-graduate School).

The emphasis in the training programme suggested is that "the good system . . . concerns itself comparatively little with practical routines except insofar as they are needed to illustrate general principles." For Mr. Irwin believes that librarianship is more than bread and butter; it is "a way of life." Great emphasis is placed on archives, with and without palaeography. Archive administration is a "branch of librarianship," and every school of librarianship "must include instruction in it." Unfortunately for my peace of mind, I find that to specialise in this branch of librarianship, a good honours degree is found necessary at the London School of Archives. Is a degree necessary, then, for all librarians who wish to specialise?

Moreover, since the point is made by Mr. Irwin that the right relation with the individual is a fundamental of good librarianship, is there no place in the course for a study of publics and the members of them? Unless the financing of the student is vastly changed, the acquiring of the scholastic merit which Mr. Irwin demands, will take far too much time and energy to allow of becoming acquainted with any member of any public outside the student world. Of two narrownesses, I prefer the Russian six months in a factory as part of the course, although I am far from convinced that there is any need for either.

Whenever a man in a high position is courageous enough to make plain his personal ideals, whether for himself or his work, no truly educated man can but admire. Whether you are stimulated, encouraged or merely irritated by this book depends on your personal faiths. Mr. Irwin hopes to "set librarians thinking along new lines." Some of the lines are not new (outside official circles), but there is food enough for thought.

D.A.R.K.